Quick Reference Guide 9

Excel 2013 for Windows
Data Validation

Data Validation

In cells with validation enabled, the creator of the spreadsheet can prompt users to choose data from a list, or restrict cells to certain data types. In Excel 2013, basic data validation is easy to setup.

In this example, we will first create the Data Validation list by manually typing it and then create the Data Validation list from a cell range. When you simply type the list, the values will not update without editing the list in the Data Validation dialog box. If you use a range of cells and you edit the range, the values in the Data Validation list will automatically adjust.

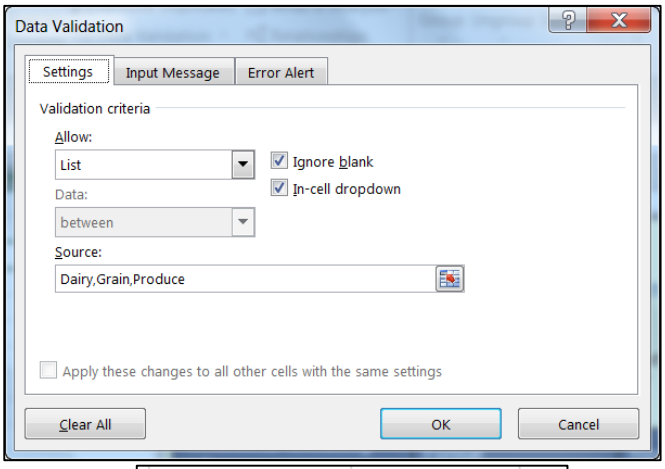
Creating Data Validation by Manually Typing

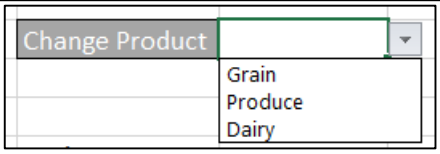
1. Select the cells in which Data Validation will be built. You can select a range to build the same drop-down list in more than one cell at a time.
2. Click the **Data Tab | Data Validation | Data Validation**. The *Data Validation* dialog box displays on the **Settings Tab** (shown right).

In the Settings tab of the Data Validation dialog box, you can set Excel to restrict entries to dates, numbers, decimals, times or a certain length. We will cover this in the section entitled Setting Data Validation to Restrict Entry Data at page 2 of this QRG.

If you want a drop-down menu, select the List option.

3. Click the **Allow** drop-down arrow and select **List**.
4. Ensure **Ignore blank** and **In-cell dropdown** are both enabled.
5. Click into the **Source** field and type the **values** for the drop-down list. Be sure to separate each item with a comma (,) (shown in the first screenshot to the right).
6. Click **OK**.



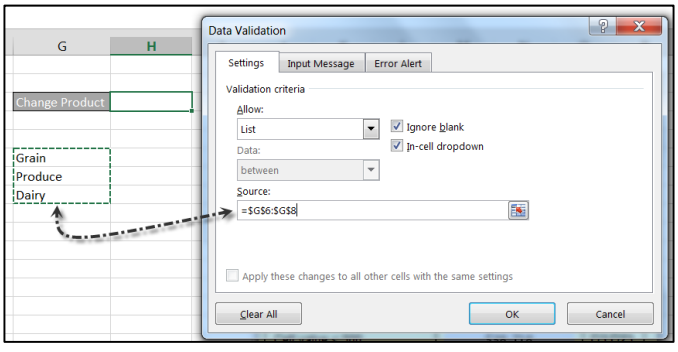


Click into the cell where the Data Validation was built. You will see a drop-down arrow which will display the Data Validation list similar to the screenshot above.

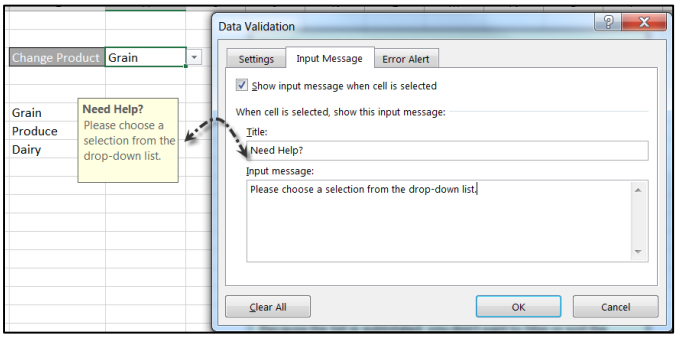
Creating Data Validation from a Range

1. Type a list of values in a range of cells somewhere in your workbook. Make note of the location of the list.
2. Click the **Data Tab | Data Validation | Data Validation**. The *Data Validation* dialog box displays on the **Settings Tab** (shown right).

   Click the **Allow** drop-down arrow and select **List**.
3. Ensure **Ignore blank** and **In-cell dropdown** are both enabled.
4. Click into the **Source** field and enter the data range containing the drop-down list values. Click **OK**.



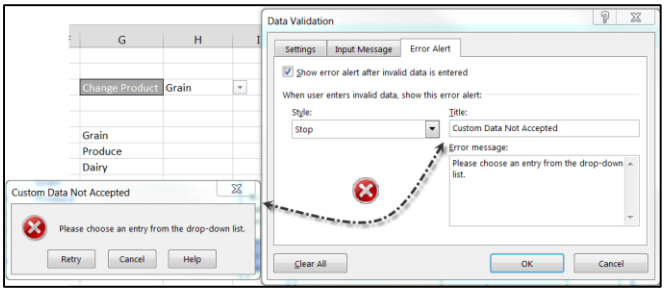
Creating an Input Message



An **Input message** is optional and is merely a tip box that appears when a user selects the cell with data validation. It is recommended to keep Input messages short and instructional.

1. In the *Data Validation* dialog box, click **Input message**.
2. Ensure **Show input message when cell is selected** is enabled.
3. Type the text of the Title in the **Title** field.
4. Type the text of the input message in the **Input message** field.
5. Click **OK.**

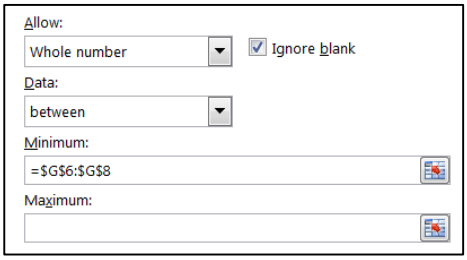
Creating an Error Alert



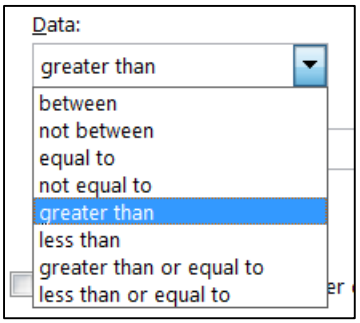
An **Error Alert** is also optional. This is just a message that will pop-up when someone tries to enter data that does not match the validation settings. The best practice is to keep it informational.

1. In the *Data Validation* dialog box, click **Error Alert**.
2. Ensure **Show error alert after invalid data is entered** is enabled.
3. Select the style of alert. Options include **Stop**, **Warning**, or **Information**.
4. Type the error message in the **Error message** field.
5. Click **OK**.

Setting Data Validation to Restrict Entry Data



In the Settings tab of the Data Validation dialog box, you can set Excel to restrict entries to dates, numbers, decimals, times or a certain length. You can specify values between two, not between two, equal to, not equal to, greater than, less than, greater than or equal to, or less than or equal to.



1. Click the **Allow** drop-down arrow to display the menu options. They include:
   a. **Whole number**: you will be prompted to identify the validation data criteria and the **Minium** and **Maximum** values (shown right).
   b. **Decimal:** you will be prompted to identify the validation data criteria and the **Minimum** and **Maximum** values (same as screenshot to the right).
   c. **Date**: you will be prompted to identify the validation data criteria and the **Start date** and **End date**.
   d. **Time**: you will be prompted to identify the validation data criteria and the **Start time** and **End time**.
   e. **Text length**: you will be prompted to identify the validation data criteria and the maximum length.
   f. **Custom**: you will be prompted to create a custom Formula.
2. Click **OK**.